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**SECTION 9.8****PARKS and RECREATION**

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Parks and recreation as discussed in this section primarily consists of active recreational opportunities, recreational facilities and related improvements, and publicly accessible passive recreational opportunities. Lands that are privately-owned, (such as preserved farmlands), or generally not publicly accessible, (such as lands associated with a residential development), but include scenic qualities and provide visual relief, are generally thought of as “open space.” Thus, developed park lands, publicly accessible recreation lands and preserved lands, are usually all considered together in developing a town-wide Open Space plan. Open space as it relates to residential developments is discussed in Section 9.2, and in regard to agriculture, is discussed in Section 9.4. Recommendations from the “Town of Montgomery Parkland and Recreation Plan,” prepared by Garling Associates and adopted by the Town Board on January 17, 2002, have been incorporated below accordingly.

**PARKS AND RECREATION GOALS**

- ☐ **Expand and develop existing park and recreation facilities.**
- ☐ **Evaluate subdivision applications for expansion of passive and active resources, particularly along and within the Wallkill River corridor.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION**

- ★ ***Periodically review and adjust, as appropriate, the fee per dwelling unit in lieu of land reservation***

In the past ten years fees have increased most dramatically in towns to the south where land costs are higher and development pressures are greater. Woodbury, Monroe, Chester, Cornwall and Blooming Grove increased their fees by an average of \$1,320.00 over the ten year period while Montgomery’s increase was \$500.00.

Review of current fees (\$1,000 per new building lot) in comparison with the market value of the land (as set forth in the Garling Associates Analysis) indicates that it is substantially cheaper for the developer to pay the fee in lieu of land, rather than set aside the required percentage of land for recreational purposes. To keep current with area practices and to appropriately off-set the anticipated future costs of meeting recreational needs for the growing population, the “recreation fee” in lieu of land should be periodically reviewed and adjusted accordingly.

### ★ *Neighborhood Parks*

Should denser subdivision development occur in more suburban existing RA-2 and RA-3 zones (prior to adoption of recommended zoning revisions in Section 9.2) it might be possible for smaller parks to be acquired and developed. This will depend on the type of land available and will be addressed on an individual basis as plans come before the Planning Board for review and approval.

### ★ *Community or Town Parks*

The Town proposes future park sites to serve populations in each sector of the Town. Benedict Farm's parkland will serve the Kaisertown Road area and locations below Hill Avenue to River Road. This park area could be expanded in the future as development occurs with particular emphasis on access to the Wallkill River and river front parcels. Berea Park is the main Town park and services the entire Town via organized football, softball and other recreational pursuits. The River Front Park and its extensions along the Wallkill River will also serve the entire Town and the Bailey Road area. To the north future parks are anticipated east and west of Walden. One location on Plains Road is currently under consideration and is described below.

The future park serving the northeast section of the Town could be approximately 65 acres off Plains Road, and would include the Town's closed landfill site. A potential clustered development of three separate parcels off Plains and Kings Hill Road could provide the balance of the property.

The Town should retain access to the site west of Plains Road for future parkland purposes. This land had access to a county highway, ties the Town's property to the west to Plains Road and would be developable for ball fields for the northeast portion of the Town. This park will be centrally located on a county road capable of serving the area of Town east of the Wallkill River and north of Route 52. Lands along Plains Road could be available for development within ten years. Because of the generally low density nature of this area of Town many of the present residents will continue to utilize many of the parks in Walden, Berea Park and River Front Park.

Development north of Hill Avenue in the Route 52 area west of the Wallkill River has been concentrated around large lots and low density development. As development occurs in this area the Town should evaluate each parcel for its recreation potential. In the future, land for park of ten to twenty-five acres or more could be sought to be set aside for recreational development in this area.

South of Route 17K in the areas zoned RA-2 and RA-3 the Town anticipates growth at its greatest densities. In this location there will eventually be a need for a park of twenty to thirty acres to serve the future area population. This park will be developed as land becomes available either by sale or through the subdivision or site plan approval process.

☆ ***Linear Park along the Wallkill River***

The Town possesses a unique recreational feature, the Wallkill River. Efforts since the 1980's Plan to increase public access to, and preservation of buffer lands of, the Wallkill River have been successful. The Town has acquired and developed parkland on the east side of the Wallkill River, the River Front Park and protected existing farmlands on the west side of the river through its PDR program. Open space and conservation easements should continue to be pursued by Planning Board to protect this linear open space corridor. Development of a river recreation and preservation corridor should be coordinated with the villages of Walden and Montgomery. Connections to nearby "rail trails" should be considered as well.

Should development continue in the current RM-1, RA-2 and RA-3 areas north of Route 17K the River Front Park could be expanded to service the population in this area. Better access to Town roads would also be sought as well as the continuation of access to the Wallkill River.

☆ ***Regional Parks***

It is not really within the scope of the Town's financial capabilities, or desires, to develop these type of parks. Its focus should be on providing adequate recreational services and facilities at its existing (and proposed) parks to meet current needs and future demands. Regional park needs of the Town's residents should be conveyed to the County, and state as may be appropriate, and the Town should participate in future planning efforts to improve existing County parks and amenities or in developing new facilities and locations.

☆ ***Re-use of former railroad rights-of-way***

The Town owns approximately 22.4 acres of land formerly utilized for railroad purposes. Consideration should be given to establishing these lands as "rail-trails" to be used for recreational purposes. Substantial technical assistance as well as some financial assistance is available to the town, as a Greenway Community from the Hudson River Greenway Communities Council. Connections to other rail trail efforts, existing and proposed parks and to existing publicly accessible trails are encouraged.

★ *Active recreational opportunities and improvements*

Today's increasingly obese society, particularly among children, is in need of active recreational inspiration. The Town should continue to coordinate and cooperate with school districts to ensure the adequacy of its ballfields, playgrounds, play areas and related amenities. Additional recreational needs not addressed in the earlier plans should be considered in the Town's park and recreational opportunity development plans. Zoning amendments that might encourage private development of active recreation facilities (such as an indoor tennis club) should also be considered.

A "Recreation Plan" that is separate from any open space planning efforts is recommended. Such a Recreation Plan would evaluate the adequacy of existing sports and recreation physical improvements and amenities to determine needed improvements and additions. A Recreation Plan would evaluate recreation-related infrastructure, such as parking, access and ADA accessibility, address maintenance, and evaluate existing and needed youth-oriented recreational programs and services (i.e., sports programs, youth center, swimming facilities, etc.)

